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H.913

Introduced by Committee on Government Operations

Date:

Subject: Executive; boards and commissions; mergers, repeals, and per diems

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to combine, eliminate, and provide per diems for certain State boards and commissions and to provide for the review of the ongoing necessity for the State's boards and commissions.

An act relating to boards and commissions

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

* * * Merger of Groundwater and Well Water Committees * * *

Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 1392 is amended to read:

§ 1392. DUTIES; POWERS OF SECRETARY

(a) The Secretary shall develop a comprehensive groundwater management program to protect the quality of groundwater resources by:

* * *

(c)(1) The Secretary shall establish a groundwater coordinating committee, with representation from the Division of Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection within the Department, the Division of Geology and Mineral

1 Resources within the Department, the Agency of Agriculture, Food and
2 Markets, and the Departments of Forests, Parks and Recreation and of Health
3 to provide advice in the development of the program and its implementation,
4 on issues concerning groundwater quality and quantity, and on groundwater
5 issues relevant to well-drilling activities and the licensure of well drillers.

6 (2) In carrying out his or her duties under this subchapter, the Secretary
7 shall give due consideration to the recommendations of the groundwater
8 coordinating committee.

9 (3) The Secretary may request representatives of other agencies and the
10 private sector, including licensed well drillers, to serve on the groundwater
11 coordinating committee.

12 * * *

13 Sec. 2. 10 V.S.A. § 1395b is amended to read:

14 § 1395b. ~~WATER WELL ADVISORY COMMITTEE~~

15 ~~(a) The Vermont water well advisory committee is created. The committee~~
16 ~~shall consist of seven members: the director of the groundwater and water~~
17 ~~supply division, the state geologist, a representative from the department of~~
18 ~~health, and four members appointed by the governor. Three of the four public~~
19 ~~members shall be licensed well drillers, with at least five years of experience.~~
20 ~~The fourth public member shall be a person not associated with the well-~~
21 ~~drilling business who has an interest in wells and water quality.~~

1 ~~(b) The purpose of the committee is to advise and assist agency personnel~~
2 ~~in the formulation of policy, including recommended statutory and regulatory~~
3 ~~changes, regarding the proper installation and maintenance of water wells,~~
4 ~~licensing of well drillers, and groundwater issues impacted by well-drilling~~
5 ~~activities. The committee shall promote and encourage cooperation and~~
6 ~~communication between governmental agencies, licensed well drillers, and~~
7 ~~members of the general public.~~

8 ~~(c) Members shall be appointed for terms of five years, with the initial~~
9 ~~appointments of the public members made for lesser terms, so that the~~
10 ~~appointments do not all expire simultaneously. Vacancies shall be filled by the~~
11 ~~governor for the length of an unexpired term.~~

12 ~~(d) The committee shall elect a chair and a secretary, and shall meet from~~
13 ~~time to time as may be necessary, but not less than quarterly.~~

14 ~~(e) The public members of the committee shall be volunteers, and will~~
15 ~~serve without compensation. [Repealed.]~~

16 Sec. 3. IMPLEMENTATION

17 (a) The terms of the members of the Vermont Water Well Advisory
18 Committee shall expire on the effective date of this act.

19 (b) The Secretary of Natural Resources may provide those members with
20 the opportunity to serve on the groundwater coordinating committee.

21 * * * Repeal of Valuation Appeal Board * * *

1 Sec. 4. 32 V.S.A. § 5407 is amended to read:

2 § 5407. ~~VALUATION APPEAL BOARD~~

3 ~~(a) There is established a Valuation Appeal Board to consist of five~~
4 ~~members. The members shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice~~
5 ~~and consent of the Senate, for three-year terms beginning February 1 of the~~
6 ~~year in which the appointment is made, except that one of the initial~~
7 ~~appointments shall be for a term of one year and two of the initial~~
8 ~~appointments shall be for a term of two years. A vacancy in the Board shall be~~
9 ~~filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired portion~~
10 ~~of the term vacated.~~

11 ~~(b) Persons serving on the Appeal Board shall be knowledgeable and~~
12 ~~experienced in at least one of the following fields: agriculture, business~~
13 ~~management, law, taxation, appraisal and valuation techniques, municipal~~
14 ~~affairs, or related areas. No member of the Valuation Appeal Board shall be~~
15 ~~otherwise employed by the State or be a lister. In making appointments,~~
16 ~~attention shall be given to the desirability of providing geographical balance to~~
17 ~~the degree reasonably practical.~~

18 ~~(c) A Chair shall be designated biennially by the Governor from among the~~
19 ~~members of the Board and any vacancy in the Office of the Chair shall be~~
20 ~~filled by designation of the Governor.~~

21 ~~(d) Members of the Valuation Appeal Board shall receive a sum not to~~

1 ~~exceed \$80.00 per diem for each day of official duties of the Board together~~
2 ~~with reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of~~
3 ~~their duties, as determined by the Director of Property Valuation and Review.~~

4 ~~(e) The Board shall be attached for administrative purposes to the Division~~
5 ~~of Property Valuation and Review of the Department of Taxes of the Agency~~
6 ~~of Administration. [Repealed.]~~

7 Sec. 5. 32 V.S.A. § 5408 is amended to read:

8 § 5408. PETITION FOR REDETERMINATION

9 (a) Not later than 35 days after mailing of a notice under section 5406 of
10 this title, a municipality may petition the Director of Property Valuation and
11 Review for a redetermination of the municipality's equalized education
12 property value and coefficient of dispersion. ~~Such~~ The petition shall be in
13 writing and shall be signed by the chair of the legislative body of the
14 municipality or ~~his or her~~ designee.

15 (b)(1) Upon receipt of a petition for redetermination under subsection (a)
16 of this section, the Director shall, after written notice, grant a hearing upon the
17 petition to the aggrieved town.

18 (2) The Director shall thereafter notify the town and the Secretary of
19 Education of his or her redetermination of the equalized education property
20 value and coefficient of dispersion of the town or district, in the manner
21 provided for notices of original determinations under section 5406 of this title.

1 (c)(1) A municipality, within 30 days of ~~after~~ the Director's
2 redetermination, may appeal the redetermination to the ~~Valuation Appeal~~
3 Board. ~~The Board shall notify the appellee of the filing of the appeal. The~~
4 ~~appeal shall be heard de novo in the manner provided by 3 V.S.A. chapter 25~~
5 ~~for the hearing of contested cases.~~

6 (d) ~~A municipality or the Division of Property Valuation and Review may~~
7 ~~appeal from a decision of the Valuation Appeal Board to the Superior Court of~~
8 ~~the county in which the municipality is located. The Superior Court shall hear~~
9 ~~the matter de novo in the manner provided by V.R.C.P. Rule 74 of the Vermont~~
10 ~~Rules of Civil Procedure.~~

11 (2) An appeal from the decision of the Superior Court shall be to the
12 Supreme Court under the Vermont Rules of Appellate Procedure.

13 * * * Permitting Per Diems Currently Prohibited * * *

14 Sec. 6. 3 V.S.A. § 22 is amended to read:

15 § 22. THE COMMISSION ON WOMEN

16 (a)(1) The Commission on Women is created as the successor to the
17 Governor's Commission on Women established by Executive Order No. 20-
18 86. The Commission shall be organized and have the duties and
19 responsibilities as provided in this section.

20 (2) The Commission shall be an independent agency of the government
21 of Vermont and shall not be subject to the control of any other department or

1 agency.

2 (3) Members of the Commission shall be drawn from throughout the
3 State and from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and
4 socioeconomic backgrounds, and shall have had experience working toward
5 the improvement of the status of women in society.

6 (b) The Commission shall consist of 16 members, appointed as follows:

7 (1) Eight members shall be appointed by the Governor; ~~no~~ not more
8 than four of whom shall be from one political party.

9 (2)(A) ~~Six~~ Eight members shall be appointed by the legislature General
10 Assembly, ~~three~~ four by the Senate Committee on Committees, and ~~three~~ four
11 by the Speaker of the House; ~~no~~ no

12 (B) Not more than two appointees shall be members of the
13 legislature. ~~Each~~ General Assembly, and each appointing authority shall
14 appoint ~~no~~ not more than two members from the same political party.

15 (3) ~~Two members, one each from the two major political parties.~~

16 (c) The terms of members shall be four years. ~~Members of the~~
17 ~~Commission currently appointed and serving pursuant to Executive Order No.~~
18 ~~20-86 on July 1, 2002 may continue to serve for the duration of the four year~~
19 ~~term to which they were appointed. As terms of currently serving members~~
20 ~~expire, appointments of successors shall be in accord with the provisions of~~
21 ~~subsection (b) of this section, and made in the following order:~~

1 legislature General Assembly shall, in the absence of express authorization by
2 the ~~Legislature~~ General Assembly, be used directly or indirectly for legislative
3 or administrative advocacy. The Commission shall review and amend as
4 necessary all existing contracts and grants to ensure compliance with this
5 subsection.

6 (2) ~~For purposes of~~ As used in this subsection, legislative or
7 administrative advocacy means employment of a lobbyist as defined in 2
8 V.S.A. chapter 11, or employment ~~of,~~ ~~or~~ establishment ~~of,~~ or maintenance of, a
9 lobbyist position whose primary function is to influence legislators or State
10 officials with respect to pending legislation or ~~regulations~~ rules.

11 Sec. 7. COMMISSION ON WOMEN; CURRENT TERMS

12 A member of the Commission on Women on the effective date of this act
13 whose appointing authority is repealed under the provisions of Sec. 6 of this
14 act may serve the remainder of her or his term.

15 Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. § 1372 is amended to read:

16 § 1372. MEMBERS_{5,2}; APPOINTMENT_{5,2}; TERM

17 (a) Within 30 days after he ~~or she~~ has executed the ~~compact~~ Compact with
18 any or all of the states legally joined therein, the ~~governor~~ Governor shall
19 appoint three persons to serve as commissioners to the New England Interstate
20 Water Pollution Control Commission. The ~~commissioner of environmental~~
21 ~~conservation~~ Commissioner of Environmental Conservation and the

1 ~~commissioner of health~~ Commissioner of Health shall serve as ex officio
2 ~~commissioners thereon~~ on the Commission.

3 (b) The commissioners so appointed shall hold office for six years.

4 ~~Vacancies~~ A vacancy occurring in the office of ~~the commissioners a~~
5 ~~commissioner~~ shall be filled by the ~~governor~~ Governor for the unexpired
6 portion of the term.

7 (c) The commissioners shall ~~serve without~~ be entitled to per diem
8 ~~compensation but shall be paid for their actual~~ and reimbursement of expenses
9 ~~incurred in and incident to the performance of their duties~~ accordance with
10 32 V.S.A. § 1010.

11 (d) The commissioners shall have the powers and duties and be subject to
12 limitations as set forth in the ~~compact~~ Compact.

13 * * * Sunset Advisory Commission * * *

14 Sec. 9. 3 V.S.A. § 268 is added to read:

15 § 268. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS; SUNSET ADVISORY

16 COMMISSION

17 (a) Creation.

18 (1) There is created the Sunset Advisory Commission to review existing
19 State boards and commissions, to recommend the elimination of any board or
20 commission that it deems no longer necessary or the revision of any of the
21 powers and duties of a board or commission, and to recommend whether

1 members of the boards and commissions should be entitled to receive per diem
2 compensation.

3 (2) As used in this section, “State boards and commissions” means
4 professional or occupational licensing boards or commissions, advisory boards
5 or commissions, appeals boards, promotional boards, interstate boards,
6 supervisory boards and councils, and any other boards or commissions of the
7 State.

8 (b) Membership.

9 (1) The Commission shall be composed of the following six members:

10 (A) two current members of the House of Representatives who shall
11 not both be from the same political party and one of whom shall be appointed
12 co-chair, who shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

13 (B) two current members of the Senate, who shall not both be from
14 the same political party and one of whom shall be appointed co-chair, who
15 shall be appointed by the Committee on Committees; and

16 (C) two persons appointed by the Governor.

17 (2) Members shall be appointed at the beginning of each biennium. A
18 member shall serve biennially and until his or her successor is appointed,
19 except that a legislative member’s term on the Commission shall expire on the
20 date he or she ceases to be a member of the General Assembly.

21 (c) Powers and duties. The Commission shall have the following powers

1 and duties:

2 (1) Inventory; group; review schedule. The Commission shall inventory
3 all of the State boards and commissions, organize them into groups, and
4 establish a schedule to conduct a review of one group each biennium.

5 (2) Biennial review.

6 (A) Each biennium, the Commission shall review all of the State
7 boards and commissions within one of its inventoried groups and shall take
8 testimony regarding whether each of those boards and commissions should
9 continue to operate or be eliminated and whether the powers and duties of any
10 of those boards and commissions should be revised.

11 (B) In its review of each State board and commission, the
12 Commission shall consider:

13 (i) the purpose of the board or commission and whether that
14 purpose is still needed;

15 (ii) how well the board or commission performs in executing that
16 purpose; and

17 (iii) if the purpose is still needed, whether State government
18 would be more effective and efficient if the purpose were executed in a
19 different manner.

20 (C) Each board and commission shall have the burden of justifying
21 its continued operation.

1 (D) For any board or commission that the Commission determines
2 should continue to operate, the Commission shall also determine whether
3 members of that board or commission should be entitled to receive per diem
4 compensation and if so, the amount of that compensation.

5 (3) Biennial report. On or before the end of the biennium during which
6 it reviews a group, the Commission shall submit to the House and Senate
7 Committees on Government Operations its findings, any recommendation to
8 eliminate a State board or commission within that group or to revise the
9 powers and duties of a board or commission within the group, its
10 recommendations regarding board or commission member per diem
11 compensation, and any other recommendations for legislative action. The
12 provisions of 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) (expiration of required reports) shall not apply
13 to the report to be made under this subsection.

14 (d) Assistance. The Commission shall have the administrative, technical,
15 and legal assistance of the Office of Legislative Council, the Joint Fiscal
16 Office, and the Agency of Administration.

17 (e) Compensation and expense reimbursement.

18 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
19 Assembly, a legislative member of the Commission shall be entitled to per
20 diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406
21 for not more than five meetings per year. These payments shall be made from

1 monies appropriated to the General Assembly.

2 (2) Other members of the Commission who are not employees of the
3 State of Vermont and who are not otherwise compensated or reimbursed for
4 their attendance shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement
5 of expenses pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than five meetings per
6 year. These payments shall be made from monies appropriated to the Agency
7 of Administration.

8 Sec. 10. TRANSITIONAL PROVISION; INITIAL SUNSET ADVISORY

9 COMMISSION

10 The members of the initial Sunset Advisory Commission established in
11 3 V.S.A. § 268 in Sec. 9 of this act shall be appointed on or before October 15,
12 2018 and shall meet prior to the 2019-2020 biennium in order to inventory all
13 of the State boards and commissions and organize them into groups as
14 described in Sec. 9 of this act in 3 V.S.A. § 268(c) so as to be able to review all
15 groups within four bienniums, and during the 2019-2020 biennium those
16 members shall conduct the first biennial review of a group in accordance with
17 that subsection.

18 Sec. 11. SUNSET OF THE SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION

19 3 V.S.A. § 268 (boards and commissions; Sunset Advisory Commission) is
20 repealed on January 6, 2027.

21 * * * Effective Date * * *

1 Sec. 12. EFFECTIVE DATE

2 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.